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Director of Central Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily (Cable)

9 May 1981

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ARGENTINA-CHILE: Political Impact of Border Closure

Argentine Army Commander Galtieri's decision to close the border with Chile last week angered the other members of the ruling junta and has served to strengthen President Viola's position. [redacted] 3.5(c)

Galtieri's hasty action, which followed the arrest on espionage charges of two Argentine Army officers and their wives in a Chilean border town, was taken without consulting Viola or the other junta members, Admiral Lambruschini and Air Force General Graffigna. [redacted] 3.5(c)

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Although Galtieri probably has been chastened by the incident, he will continue to wield considerable power as commander of the most important service branch.// [redacted] 3.5(c)

//Galtieri's overreaction, which also embarrassed the Foreign Ministry and alarmed Vatican mediators of the Beagle Channel dispute, has complicated already strained relations with Chile. Pope John Paul II has appealed to both countries to maintain an atmosphere that will permit the Vatican's mediation to succeed. Argentina reopened the border on Friday, and to demonstrate good will the two countries may eventually work out an exchange of prisoners.// [redacted] 3.5(c)

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